(a) whether the Central Government have appointed any Committee to find out the possibility of using coir products for constructing border roads;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any report has been submitted so far in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) No such Committee has been formed. However, a trial for use of Coir geo-textile on an embankment under construction, near Silchar on NH 53, under Project Pushpak of Border Roads Organisation, is proposed to be conducted jointly by Coir Board and BRO. The performance of Coir geo-textile in stabilizing the slope during the trial will be studied by both the parties. The modalities are being worked out jointly by Coir Board and Border Roads Organisation.

Induction of AWACS

5487. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether IAF propose to purchase/obtain on lease two Russian A-50 Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AWACS); and

(b) if so, by when they are likely to be inducted?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The IAF has no plans to purchase or obtain two Russian AWACS on lease. However, one Russian AWACS A-50 aircraft was recently taken on lease for 30 days from Russia for demonstrations to provide hands on experience to IAF operators.

Employment of Retired Defence Personnel

5488. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large percentage of retired defence personnel are without employment after their retirement from the defence forces;

(b) whether Government have done any survey on how many retired and able defence personnel want to work and are unemployed;

(c) to what extent Government have failed to evolve adequate opportunities to rehabilitate retired personnel in some form of gainful employment;